

# PUBLIC DANCING AT CABARETS A GROWING EVIL IN NEW YORK

Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge Speaks Out Concerning a Practice Increasing Among Young Women—Mayor Gaynor's Action in Revoking All Night Licenses a Blow at the Turkey Trot and the Tango

MAYOR GAYNOR'S action in revoking every all night liquor license in Greater New York and directing the police to compel the closing at 1 o'clock in the morning of every restaurant where liquor is served, the order to go into effect next Tuesday morning, may have one effect which was not generally foreseen when it was first made public. By some persons it is taken to mean that a light is to be called on the fashion of indulging in the bunny hug, the grizzly bear, the Texas tommy, the tango and dances of that description in fashionable restaurants, more particularly those where cabaret shows are given and where young women and girls, including many debutantes, have been practicing these dances often until after 1 o'clock in the morning.

It is believed the Mayor's order, forbidding the sale of liquor of any kind after 1 A. M. will do much toward depriving fashionable restaurants of the incentive to keep open after the hour indicated, thus curtailing the opportunity for dancing in those establishments which cater more especially to customers of the higher class. The change that extremes in dancing by patrons have been reached in many of those places was brought, it was said, to the Mayor's attention some time ago, whereupon he caused a private investigation to be made with the object of ascertaining if conditions really were as serious as represented. The reports submitted to him, it is declared, in part decided him to order the selling of liquor in restaurants and hotels to cease at 1 A. M.

Mayor Gaynor is not the only Chief Magistrate of a city to whose ears tales have been brought of the lengths to which some people have gone in the dances which are at present the fashion. In Hackensack Mayor Cortlandt McKim has created a sensation by characterizing the dancing at the charity ball given on Easter Monday for the benefit of the Hackensack Hospital as "disgusting and disgraceful." The Mayor, who was himself a

member of the committee in charge of the ball, said:

"The most disgraceful dances, including the turkey trot, the bunny hug and the tango, were permitted without the slightest attempt at interference. I cannot understand how respectable people can dance those new dances. The young people started the affair, which seemed to spread like wildfire, and soon older couples were following suit. These startling dances did not begin until well after midnight, and were confined, I must admit, mostly to the younger set."

The greater part of those who attended the ball expressed the belief that the Mayor's remarks were "entirely uncalled for," and added that the Mayor might, at least in their opinion, have avoided giving publicity to his opinion. Others, however, believe that he did a courageous thing and that he should be complimented for having directed public attention to what they assert is a growing evil.

Many persons in New York city hold the view that these dances are not alone entirely objectionable in themselves, but that their moral effect upon women, particularly girls, is bad. Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge consented to give her opinion on the subject. She is well known in New York society and is one of the organizers of the fashionable Junior Cotillon. She said:

"I know nothing about the wisdom of Mayor Gaynor's action. I assume that he must have received some recent information that things have been going on at night in certain public restaurants that are more than reprehensible or he would not have taken such extreme action."

"I know nothing about the matter personally, as I have been in one of those restaurants on one occasion only, when I went solely for curiosity, but I have heard a great deal about the subject from the young people. It is perfectly well known that prominent young society women and girls, even debutantes, go to some of the best known of these restaurants, especially

those that give cabaret performances, and this season, even more so than was the case last season, dance on the same floor and at the same time as the very promiscuous company. Indeed, they have been known to dance in many cases with the performers themselves. I am informed."

"It is quite well known throughout New York society that such things are going on constantly, and there is a great deal of criticism of the actions of these young women, particularly of the debutantes, among the younger set of men."

"I should say that a lack of knowledge of appropriateness and certainly a lack of standards in behavior have also induced a certain looseness of conversation among young people. I do not see why if a young fellow accompanies a debutante or a very young girl to such places and not only dances with her but sees her dance with some of the performers, who often are of questionable character, he should not think he has a right to indulge in the same kind of conversation as he might with a common Broadway woman."

"Again it is the fault of the mothers, and I cannot criticize too strongly the women who take their daughters to such places. If any had results follow they have only themselves to blame."

"The frequenting of such restaurants is not a fashion; it is merely a fad. It is a pleasure to feel that the majority of women are still careful of their daughters' welfare and try at least to know where they are after 12 o'clock at night, if not before."

"I think any dance can be danced improperly if a person wishes to do so, but the modern dances, not only the turkey trot but even the modified forms of the fashionable dances, lend themselves more easily to improper and suggestive dancing than did the old ones. The new dances are danced just as gracefully and properly as can the waltz and the polka, but in most cases they are not. I should say that the one who is considered the best dancer nowadays

is not the one who shows any particular grace, but the one who displays the greatest athletics and in some cases abandon."

"I have been asked if I thought the turkey trot, the bunny hug and some of the other dances are immoral. Nothing is really immoral, it is the way in which it is done. The so-called Argentine tango as now danced in New York society is not in the slightest degree what is danced in Argentina, where it originated, and in other southern countries. The real tango, I am told by those who have seen it danced in Argentina and elsewhere, would never be permitted, even in the variety theatres in New York, and that is saying a great deal."

"The tango as it is now danced in New York was invented in Paris and imported from there. Some of the steps are perfectly correct in so far as good taste is concerned, but some of the recent ones that have been added are, to say the least, suggestive."

"After all, the general objection to modern dancing is the way in which the man holds the girl. There is a right way and a wrong way, and but one right way. If the position is a proper one it is almost impossible to dance in a suggestive or immodest manner."

"For myself I cannot now see what is to stop all these conditions. Certainly closing the dance halls and preventing liquor being sold after 1 o'clock in the morning is not going to do it. On the other hand, all of the present agitation or extreme action of some of the officials is bound to bring the whole question into the open and before the public. Things that have been going on and have been known to comparatively few persons are now being talked of publicly. In consequence there will probably be eventually a strong moral reaction as a result of the expected forthcoming publicity."

"After all this will be but another evidence of the general attitude of the American people on public questions. They are evidently about to take the same stand on this subject as they do on many others where a wrong is being committed and a remedy is needed. They let well enough alone until they discover that the 'well enough' is bad, and when they actually discover how bad things really are they wake up and take decided action."

"The opinions I am expressing are shared by hundreds of women who have been watching the way things have been going on this winter, but many of them



THE LURE OF THE "TROT."

are timid about expressing their views openly. These evil conditions are not confined, as some people mistakenly imagine, to the society of which they read in the daily newspapers. Possibly, as

following the example of better society, the example set has been followed and has gone much further down the social scale and is therefore much more general than might be suspected. These

conditions are not in the least confined to the city of New York. They started here, it is true, but in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago and in many places further west conditions are quite as bad.

"Let us hope that a change for the better and the hoped for reaction toward decency in dancing, which really includes the subject of proper dressing by women and girls, will start in New York also, and like the bad example too, spread throughout the country, because, after all, broadly speaking, New York sets the example for good or evil throughout the United States."

Mrs. Howard Davis and Mrs. William Armstrong, also members of the Junior Cotillon, agree heartily with Mrs. Dodge in her views on the inadvisability of young women and girls attending cabaret performances in restaurants and similar public places where they take the opportunity of practicing those dances which, while popular with society at present, are regarded by many as immodest and dangerous to the morals of young people when danced as many of them often are. They believe something should be done to check what they say really is an evil. This may well be done through public opinion, if in no other way.

Mrs. Nelson Henry said: "The public does not yet realize the extent to which the habit of young women and girls attending restaurants where cabarets are given and dancing there has grown. It has grown on the public fancy, largely among society women. I should say, in the abstract, that it is a very bad precedent to establish, allowing young girls and young women to attend such places, many of them going there without proper chaperons; even with chaperons it is inadvisable."

"It is not only in the evenings that girls and young women go to such places and dance, but in the afternoon also. They take advantage of the opportunity to dance in the mixed company which is often to be found there. The danger which presents itself under such conditions must be apparent. I do not believe that the mothers of these girls or the husbands or other male relatives of young girls who visit these dance halls realize the extent to which this habit has grown nor the jeopardy in which these women and girls are placed. It is a matter which might well justify their serious consideration and investigation."

"I believe that the publicity which the subject is evidently about to be given will awaken the people generally to what is rapidly becoming a serious danger to public as well as to private morals."

## Cost Price Stores.

The recent opening of a cost price provision store by the Interborough Rapid Transit Company of New York for the use of the 20,000 employees on its rolls has been hailed with great satisfaction by all those to be benefited, but there is an angle to the news that has not been generally considered. That is that the gain to the railroad employees will mean a severe loss to many retail tradesmen who have made a specialty of catering to the Interborough men.

In some districts where a number of the motormen and conductors and trainmen have made their homes so as to be nearer to their work at the starting out hour butchers and bakers and grocers and delicatessens have made quite a nice little penny by serving the employees. While they have other custom, none of it equals in aggregate the Interborough trade. These tradesmen have already begun to complain against what they deem a socialist innovation. The employees, however, are loaded to the muzzle with argument showing they deserve the benefit now enjoyed, and they are not backward about saying what they think to their former storekeepers.

The railroad company will establish five more stores very shortly, so that there will be a regular chain of places for the employees to buy at cost price without paying cartage to reach the buying point. In the meantime the commission men and others who are selling goods in great quantities to the buyers for the store are not by any means inveighing against the new departure.

# NEW YORK WOMEN AROUSED BY ATTEMPT TO REGULATE FASHIONS

Discuss Bill in Ohio Legislature Establishing Commission to Control Feminine Garb—Is Woman's Dress Immodest?

LOUIS H. CAPPELLE of Cincinnati, a member of the Ohio Legislature, has undertaken to regulate women's dress. He introduced a bill in the Legislature a few days ago in which he asserts that "a great wave of immorality is now sweeping over the country," and declaring that this is due to the immodesty of the attire worn by women generally in the streets and in public places. He seeks to have a commission appointed to "prescribe the fashions worn by women in the State of Ohio."

In view of the criticism his action has aroused Mr. Cappelle may take satisfaction in knowing that at the Congress of Physicians held in Rome last week a resolution was adopted to the effect that the fashions in women's dress have largely contributed to the great increase in tuberculosis, and urging that some international arrangement be made for such correction in women's dress as may arrest the progress of the disease. The Congress is reported in cable dispatches from Rome, is preparing a report on the subject for presentation to the Italian Government. Of course the Congress considered the subject only from a medical standpoint.

The preamble to Mr. Cappelle's bill says:

"Whereas, the charge has been lodged against the Governor of Ohio that immorality is being spread by married men in the office of the State House and elsewhere in the State of Ohio, the same being a part of the general immorality against which the people of this and other States are up in arms and have demanded a sweeping investigation, and

"Whereas, the press of this State is teeming with stories of the downfall of young girls, and the pulpit has thundered repeatedly against the immodesty of the attire worn by women on the streets and in public places, and

"Whereas, the press of pulp and press have been ignored in the fashions which have been worn in the past, and each succeeding fashion has been more flaunting and indecent than the preceding one, and

"Whereas, the definite charge has been made by ministers of the gospel that the present wave of immorality is directly due to the immodesty of the attire worn by women; now, therefore, be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

"That the bill provides that the Governor shall appoint three qualified electors of this State as members of the State Dress Reform Commission for Women, and more than two members 'shall be married men and all must be of good moral character and be not less than 30 years of age and not more than 50 years of age.' One member 'shall be a duly ordained Minister of the Gospel, and must be the parent of not less than three children and one must be a salaried settlement worker.' Members of the commission shall receive \$2,500 a year each.

The commission is authorized to summon and compel the attendance of witnesses and also to compel the production of books and papers. It is directed "to hear testimony and collect data concerning the effect of the present day wearing apparel of women on the morals of the community," and "to prescribe rules and regulations for the designing and manufacture of women's clothing, and to prohibit such styles and patterns of garments as the commission after hearing shall deem to be detrimental to virtue."

Appeals from the orders of the commission may be taken to the Supreme Court of Ohio.

It is expressly provided that "the commission shall have sole authority to prescribe the fashions to be worn by women in the State of Ohio. It shall have authority to specially prescribe the design and fashion as to each outer garment and may condemn and prohibit the sale and wearing of, or hav-

ing in possession, any garment of outer wear which, in the opinion of the commission or its agents, would be detrimental to the morals of the community if worn in a public place."

Another section of the bill provides that "the commission shall have authority to prohibit the sale, display or wearing of garments composed in whole or in part of any transparent material or of any garment which unduly displays or accentuates the outline of the female figure." It shall prescribe that "no female over fourteen years of age may wear in public a garment commonly called a skirt which does not reach to that part of the foot known as the instep." It may also prescribe "the cut and style of that portion of

inches more or less on the bottom of a woman's skirt or an excess of abbreviation of the height of the collar on a woman's dress it must be taken as an indication of his mental calibre."

This bill is in itself an excellent illustration of how some men will strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Palpably the measure has been introduced largely at the behest of men milliners and dressmakers.

I believe in getting down to fundamentals and letting the non-essentials go. It is laughable if nothing else to think of men legislating on the subject of women's dress. I stand for conservatism in the dress of women, but it is tremendously barbarous when men set up to dictate what women shall and shall not wear.

The men of Ohio turned down the question of equal suffrage. Now they are beating about the bush in their efforts to harass and annoy women in every way they can. It is quite characteristic, however. That is the way some men do things every time.

Not a MAKER OF LAW.

By MRS. ARTHUR M. DODGE, President of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.

I am not at all sure that it may be absolutely stated that "a great wave of immorality is sweeping over the country," as Representative Cappelle of Ohio asserts, but it is certainly true that there is a great deal more immorality in the cities, and especially among young people, than there used to be. It is not what might be called absolute immorality, but rather a lack of sense of decency and behavior. Standards and ideals are lower. The liberty which our mothers demanded and obtained is now going straight into license on every side.

Whether this is a result of the immodesty which is undoubtedly existent in some women's dress, or whether immodesty is the result of other things and factors which are deeper, I cannot tell.

Everything in behavior, as in clothes, goes by fashion. There is to-day existing a looseness of principle and a most extraordinary deviation from any of the accepted standards of behavior between the two sexes in the younger generation that seems almost inexplicable.

It is apparently an accepted opinion that it is almost impossible nowadays to tell the difference by their dress between some of the women of so-called society and those of the half world. It is a matter of perfectly ordinary comment among men at the clubs as well as of the man on the street. When you add to the immodesty of dress the "makeup" on the faces of many girls seen in the streets one can perhaps understand this opinion, which

only a few years ago would have been impossible. Who, for instance, a few years ago, while walking up Fifth avenue, would have questioned which were the ladies one saw, and in saying this I am not referring to women in society alone, but to ladies in any walk of life.

As to the question of the immodesty of women's attire, which disturbs Representative Cappelle so greatly, it is certain that the skirts worn at present could not well be tighter. The models brought over from Paris this season must have silt in the skirts to allow women even to move at all. We have seen the Dutch collar style progress until you find on Fifth avenue and almost everywhere else the style of waist which should only be worn in the boudoir.

The low cut of evening dress is about what it used to be, except that in many cases it is cut down to the waistline in the back. As to whether women's dress can

be regulated by legislation, as Representative Cappelle seems to believe is possible, it might be said that you cannot compel a woman to dress modestly any more than you can force a man by law not to drink if he wishes to. Both will get around the law in some way.

I think the question of women's dress is not a matter for legislation because that would be attacking the problem from the wrong side. Public opinion is the force that will make a change of all this possible, and as far as public opinion of men and women is concerned it is the men who are criticizing the present style of dress in women and not the women themselves.

This criticism is general, but not loud. Perhaps one reason for this is that American men not only allow women to do as they like, but they are so imbued with a sense of chivalry that they refuse to believe anything the women do can be intentionally wrong. Men prefer to have their relatives and friends dress as ladies, not as do the women of the demi-monde. And any man who has respect for womanhood must entertain such opinions.

LACK OF MODESTY IN DRESS.

By MISS M. DE G. TRENHOLM, Of the East Side Settlement.

I cannot feel that there is a great wave of sex immorality sweeping over the country just now, but I think perhaps we know a little more about the subject and it is more or less openly talked of.

As to whether the present mode of dressing has any effect on this evil, I think there is no doubt that the women's dress of to-day with its immodest suggestions, the low cut of the neck, the short, tight skirt and the absence of underskirts has caused women to lose much of her modesty and has done a great deal to lower the standards of relations in social intercourse between men and women.

Having accustomed themselves to this

lack of modesty in dress, women are turning to lack of modesty in all things. One can find plenty of really nice girls sitting on tables, swiveling their feet and hear them discussing the fit of shoes and stockings. I have frequently seen their male companions take hold of their feet, and they then indulge in horsey talk that one would not like to see even among boys out of a gymnasium.

It seems to me a great pity that the women of this country, who are hailed everywhere as representative, by reason of their birth and education, should copy in their manners and dress the low personification of characters portrayed on the present stage and in giving to their immodest set an example for the large masses of women who take them as their models. It might be well to remember that although in adopting the present styles this former class of women are not in danger, because of the protection with which society surrounds them, their seal of approval gives the poorer girl who imitates them a lower position in manners and morals, as well as in dress, and thus her modesty, which is her natural protection from the thousand dangers that beset her daily path, is taken away from her.

In some States women have been forbidden to wear in public places "mother Hubbard" dresses and "peek-a-boo" waists, while the proper costume for men appearing before certain courts has often been designated.

Unquestionably the women's dress of to-day is indecent to the greatest extent. In fact, I would not hesitate to call it disgusting.

Legislation alone will never regulate women's dress. We must have the real wish of the community at large to modify and keep it within what the world should call decent bounds.

EXTREMES TO BE AVOIDED.

By MRS. ELIZABETH B. GRANNIS, President National Christian League for Promotion of Purity.

In my judgment there are waves of agitation of one sort or another, not necessarily of immorality alone, which pass over the people of the United States at various intervals. The present wave of some women's dress will in turn be succeeded by a more desirable form of apparel.

I feel that the suggestion of immodesty in much of the women's dress of the present day is very much greater than are the overt acts. For instance, in our so-called high society in the United States there is a desire to go to the extreme in the matter of dress for the purpose of impressing society in other and smaller cities.

Within proper bounds the décolletage is quite permissible when it shows the profile of head, face and neck and must be admired, but extreme décolletage in the case of any person is objectionable. I remember that at the twentieth annual Council of Women, at which 2,200 women from various parts of the world were present, and which was held in Berlin five years ago, a certain woman of wealth, the wife of a well known resident of the United States, wore a gown so décolleté that it was absolutely improper. She accentuated matters by placing a beautiful red rose in her low corsage, thereby attracting additional attention.

It is ludicrous for Representative Cappelle or any other man to attempt to dictate, through legislation, what women shall or shall not wear. See what he says in his bill about openwork stockings. Women have always worn them and always will wear them as long as it so pleases them. No mortal man can ever make rules to stop women from wearing stockings of that kind. Stockings with openwork in the instep have



Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge



Mrs. Elizabeth B. Grannis.



Miss M. de G. Trenholm